

**Senate Bill 189**, under consideration at this time, would require that the dispensing of over-the-counter products containing pseudo ephedrine or ephedrine as the sole active ingredient occur behind the counter, and would require that a photo ID be shown and recorded by the seller.

**Senate Bills 41, 53, and 151** have been sent to the House for further consideration. These bills would establish penalties for installing spyware on another person's computer without their consent.

**COMMUNITIES OFFERED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION FUNDS.** The Michigan Department of Agriculture and the Michigan Agriculture Preservation Fund Board are seeking to qualify Michigan communities for farmland preservation grants. In order for a local governmental unit to qualify and apply for a grant, they must develop and adopt a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) ordinance, update the community master plan to include farmland preservation, and provide matching funds of at least 25 percent. The plan hopes to hold its first funding cycle this fall and PDRs need to be qualified by September 1, 2005. For further information, call 517-373-3328 or visit [www.michigan.gov/farmland](http://www.michigan.gov/farmland).

**FAIR SEASON.** Michigan County Fairs Schedule is out and can be found online. To check out the dates and to get contact information for each fair, visit the Department of Agriculture's website at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDA\\_2004\\_Fairs\\_List\\_86960\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MDA_2004_Fairs_List_86960_7.pdf)

**EMERALD ASH BORER.** Campers, please help protect our trees by not bringing firewood from home to use at state facilities. Avoiding any movement of Ash firewood can help protect our remaining Ash trees. Michigan has already lost approximately 10 million Ash trees to date. If state foresters catch you with Ash firewood they have the authority to confiscate it in order to help prevent the spread of this deadly disease. The state urges you to obtain your wood locally or from concession sales in the park or from private wood vendors located at the entrances to parks.



# CAPITOL News

FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE 21ST MICHIGAN SENATE DISTRICT

MAY 2005

**AND THE SURVEY SAYS. . . .** Results are in on my winter 2005 survey and I want to thank everyone that responded. This survey was primarily sent out to individuals who have e-mailed my office regarding various issues in the past. It was sent to everyone who receives the Capitol News as well. Almost one third of our responses came from our e-mailed version of the survey. The one issue that was ranked first by 240 people was Education. This was followed by 93 individuals marking Jobs as their 2nd priority and their 3rd priority was Health Care with 82 responses. In ranking an issue as number 4 in priority, it was tied, 62-62 for Higher Education and Jobs. Public Safety came in 5th, and Roads came in as the 6th and 7th priorities with Local Government coming in 8th and Taxes as 9th. Interestingly enough, Environment received votes ranging from a high of 60 to a low of 40 but did not rank higher than any other issue presented in the survey.



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**DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE. . . .** When asked whether or not you would favor or oppose a series of bills I listed, here is how you responded. Legislation that would allow local units of government to pay the difference between an employee's salary and what they would receive from the Government should their reserve unit be activated was favored by 318 "yes" to 69 "no" votes. House Bill 4117 has now been signed into law (Public Act 8 of 2005). The vote for whether we should assess a two-cent tax on plastic bags was 266 "yes" to 112 "no" and the bill has been introduced as Senate Bill 64. The companion animal tax, which would have removed the dog license fee in favor of a tax on domesticated animal pet supplies, has been dropped and is now focused on updating the Animal Control Act which was first adopted in 1919 and the legislation has not yet been introduced. Senate Bill 160, which would waive the \$10 late fee on license plate renewals for vehicles in storage at the time of renewal, providing the car was insured, was favored 276 to 110. Senate Bill 223, which would establish an agricultural apprentice incentive for businesses by providing them with a \$4,000 SBT credit for hiring an agricultural apprentice, was favored 233 "yes" to 107 "no" votes.

**STRENGTHENING MICHIGAN'S RURAL ECONOMY.** Working to diversify Michigan's rural economy, legislation has been introduced to address three key areas vital to promoting rural economic growth; helping rural residents through job training and innovation; developing a new rural economy and infrastructure; and reducing the cost of doing business and protecting the environment. Rural businesses have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified workers. Businesses wishing to expand in rural communities face challenges because those communities often lack needed infrastructure, including, among other things, communication systems. Also, many businesses in rural areas rely on agricultural tourism, processing, and production. These businesses are often inhibited by burdensome governmental rules and regulations. The proposals that have been put forth seek to help correct these problems.

**SENATE APPROVES BILL TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO PURSUE CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE.** Under legislation approved by the Michigan Senate, residents could get relief from some of their student loans if they go into fields like agricultural processing or large animal veterinary medicine. Senate Bill 228 authorizes the state to repay up to \$750 a year for 10 years of a student's education loans if the student works in agricultural processing or large animal veterinary medicine during that time. The agricultural processing industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. During a 2004 food-processing summit, participants indicated that they were having a difficult time finding workers with skills in welding, hydraulics, and woodworking. Another companion bill approved by the Senate would establish an agricultural and rural community advisory council. Both have been sent to the House for consideration.

#### **LEGISLATION SHORT TAKES:**

**Senate Bill 317 and House Bill 4524** will provide an income tax credit for land that is donated to the State or a private conservation organization.

**Senate Bill 5**, under the supervision of the Secretary of State, will allow local units of government or intermediate school districts to hold elections by mail. It will also allow for statewide elections to be held by mail, under rules that would be promulgated by the Secretary of State and would take effect no later than January 1, 2006. The legislature also makes provisions for ballots where mistakes were made and institutes penalties for those who submit more than one ballot.

**Senate Bill 309** has been introduced and would require companies to notify individuals when a security breach of a secure database containing personal identifying information occurs.

**Senate Bill 234 (Public Act 1 of 2005)** amends the vehicle code to allow MDOT, with local approval, to issue a permit to a business to sell or display goods, wares, produce, fruit, vegetables, or other merchandise within the right of way of a state trunk line highway, if it does not create an unsafe situation or interfere with transportation along the highway.